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18 August 1960

POWERS TRIAL TESTIMONY

I. As you know from the proceedings thus far in the Powers trial, Moscow seems to be taking pains to avoid any impression of a staged affair.

A. Soviet propaganda is quoting Powers family and non-Bloc lawyers that Powers is testifying freely, and Rudenko--the prosecutor--carefully refrained from pressing him on some points and allowed evasive replies to stand.

1. Interesting sidelight is that defense attorney questioned Powers about birthmark on face--after Western news dispatches made references to "red mark" on face.

B. Soviet propaganda gave heavy play to Power's testimony that plane was at 68,000 feet when hit--attempt to document claims U-2 brought down by "new and fantastic" rocket.

1. Soviet prosecutor also sought to establish aircraft could have carried nuclear weapon.

C. Another important objective of testimony has been to involve free world countries; West Germany, Sweden, Iran, and Finland have now been dragged in, in addition to Norway, Turkey, and Pakistan.

II. For foreign consumption, Moscow has tailored its broadcasting and reporting to relatively factual summaries,

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while for domestic audience reporting is liberally interspersed with slanted commentaries and denunciations of US..

A. Pre-trial propaganda attempted to build up expectations of some new and sensational development, and Soviets may be holding something of dramatic nature for climax.

III. The defense attorney indicated to Powers family that he was optimistic that death sentence could be avoided. He also hinted that the Supreme Soviet Presidium would entertain a post-trial petition for clemency.

A. This could open the way for a grand gesture by Khrushchev at some point after a conviction and stiff sentence.

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- (2) Testimony that Powers did not escape from aircraft by ejection until about 14,000 feet is apparently in conflict with earlier reports, as well as the language of the indictment, that his parachute was seen to open immediately after he was "hit". Wednesday testimony contained more details of his escape from the plane than had been published previously.
- (3) Also new information was Powers' statement to effect that long hours in the plane were boring due mainly to discomfort of the suit.

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